chicago's way out

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THE CITY MANAGER PLAN

Published by the
CHICAGO CITY MANAGER COMMITTEE
343 South Dearborn Street
Telephone HARRISON 9525
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Price — 10 cents

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Preface

For many long years, Chicago and Cook County have been governed in the interests of political machines. Public services have been absurdly and at times criminally expensive, and an outrageous condition of governmental affairs has been disclosed in spectacular scandals revealing a dangerous degree of dishonesty and mismanagement. With hundreds of millions of dollars controlled by our local government and millions of Chicagoans dependent on essential services, political misgovernment becomes intolerable.

Drastic reorganization of the city government is necessary both as an end in itself and as the first step toward improving affairs in Cook County.

This pamphlet presents the problem of bad government in Chicago and shows the way out; more than that, it shows what you can and presently will do about it yourself.

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1. THE PROBLEM

(a) Misgovernment of Chicago

Chicago's government is your government. It exists to give you such services as public works of all kinds, police, fire and health protection, and provision of educational and recreational facilities. Your public officials are elected to execute the functions of government and are charged with a duty to you and your fellow citizens to render public services efficiently, economically, honestly and for your benefit only.

You have the right to demand

ECONOMY

The South Park Board allotted $2,500,000 for the project of building Soldier Field, which finally cost the taxpayers $8,000,000. A larger and probably better stadium, the Los Angeles Civic Stadium, cost $1,700,000.

In 1931, Mayor Cermak and the City Council appointed a Mayor's Advisory Commission under Sewell L. Avery to make a survey of city departments in order to recommend improvements in techniques, elimination of wastes, and economies. The recommendations made on the basis of experts' studies over a period of six months were ignored for the most part. The following table shows 1931 costs for a few designated items, together with the recommendations of the Commission for 1932 costs:

1931 Cost	*Item*	*1932 Recommendation*
$8,155,857.00	Bureau of Streets	$6,475,526.00
1,244,400.00	Board of Local Improvements	678,680.00
795,121.00	House of Correction	595,196.00
1,444,235.00	Department of Service and Regulatory Inspections	1,046,270.00
845,080.00	Department of Law	511,580.00
512,737.00	City Comptroller's Office	352,028.00
284,050.00	City Collector	159,700.00
126,780.00	Office of City Treasurer	92,480.00
85,700.00	Department of Weights and Measures	57,290.00

In each instance, the difference in figures represented an immediate, available saving. The reports of the Commission recommended direct immediate savings of $22,150,000 for 1932 or over 18% of the 1931 expenditures for like purposes.

One disregarded recommendation of this Commission was that a Department of Central Purchasing be established to take over the activities of numerous existing agencies. Were this done, it is estimated that an annual saving of $4,000,000 would be enjoyed by the taxpayers, this amount including direct and indirect savings by the city proper and its semi-independent agencies.

Disregard of an earlier recommendation made in 1924 by Griffenhagen and Associates, after an exhaustive study of the use of the Chicago River, that a lake front harbor be built to avoid the cost of operating about 50 bridges has cost Chicagoans $3,000,000 annually.

On August 12th, 1936, the Chicago Daily News reported:

> "Even though the public schools of New York are under the control of the Tammany political organization, for half a century the archetype of municipal corruption, school children under Mayor Kelly's board of education in Chicago get a worse deal. A similar comparison holds true of Chicago with Philadelphia.
>
> "Of the money taken from the taxpayers for education, Chicago devotes more to engineers, janitors, fuel and debt service and less to teaching children the things they need to know than either of the nation's two other large cities. The crowning absurdity, as always, is that Chicago's children get only nine months' school for the money expended, while other cities get ten."

You have the right to demand

TIMELY ACTION

An adequate transportation system in Chicago would require the coordinated operation of surface, subway and elevated lines. Chicago urgently requires more means of fast transportation as seen from the fact that, with 225 square miles and a greater population, it has less miles of rapid transit than the Island of Manhattan, with an area of 22 square miles. Yet, there has been practically no ex-

penditure in Chicago for traction extensions in 25 years, whereas $500,000,000 has been spent by New York City in the last 10 years.

A subway for Chicago is still a dream.

An ordinance was introduced on April 27, 1934 and unanimously passed May 9, 1934, providing for medical examination of employees in food establishments and prohibiting the employment of those found to be carriers of infectious diseases. On July 11, 1934, it was unanimously repealed.

On August 12, 1936, the Chicago Daily News reported:

> "Col. Edgar S. Gorrell, president of the Air Transport Association and czar of the skyways, issued another warning to city officials today that unless the municipal airport problem is solved swiftly, Chicago will find itself stricken from the schedules of all trans-continental airlines and be relegated to a second class or 'feeder' air stop."

You have the right to demand

FORESIGHT AND PLANNING

There is no agency in Chicago charged with the responsibility of coordinating the present construction of public works, nor with that of providing city planning for the future.

In 1932, Griffenhagen and Associates published their exhaustive survey of local governments in Illinois; their comment on Chicago highways is as follows:

> "The various government agencies engaged in highway work in the metropolitan area individually make their own plans and expend their available funds with little knowledge or interest in what their neighboring and overlapping agencies are doing. As a result, the highway system in the metropolitan area is poorly designed, judged by any reasonable standard of service. It is far from providing a unified well-thought-out system." II-VIII-13.

The annual $3,000,000 cost to Chicagoans for the needless operation of bridges over the Chicago river was cited as one instance of the penalty for failure to look ahead. Griffenhagen and Associates cite other instances of interest:

> "The razing of a hundred miles of usable dwellings to open avenues of communication; the tearing up of pavements recently laid to provide for some utility; the wrecking of buildings today which were modern structures yesterday; the con-

fusion of industrial and residential construction in reasonably new areas (such as those near the lake and north of the river); the tremendous depreciation of values in large blighted areas and the unbelievable ugliness of those areas; and the spoiling of attractive suburban sections through the unchecked and mercenary activities of subdividers — these are just a few of the more obvious results of unplanned growth." II—XIII—5.

You have the right to demand

EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATIVE METHODS

An executive of the West Chicago Park System reported on its affairs prior to January 30, 1933:

> "Upon assuming office and acquainting myself with the situation, I found a chaotic financial condition that was slowly but surely approaching a state of bankruptcy; a tremendous load of debts incurred seemingly by those who had no idea of how they were to be met; a force of employees who had already served for 18 months with but one month's payment in cash for their labors; a neglected condition with regard to the maintenance of parkways, drives, and plantation areas; practically all buildings slowly deteriorating for lack of repairs; a farcical administration of the Civil Service Law; loose and wasteful purchasing methods in vogue; irregular and illegal accounting and business methods being practiced; and in general a careless and ineffectual service being rendered to the public."

You have the right to demand a better kind of government for Chicago.

(b) What Misgovernment Means to You

Having partially examined the record of the administration of the government of Chicago, what are the consequences of misgovernment and how are the citizens of Chicago affected?

Moneys extravagantly spent, and moneys misappropriated from city and county treasuries mean excessive cost of government!

Excessive cost of government means curtailed public services!

Curtailed public services mean inadequate police protection against robbers, thieves, morons, murderers and thugs, insecurity in our homes and businesses, danger to life, liberty and property, deficient educational facilities, and inability to solve the problem of relief.

Excessive cost of government means insufficient funds with which to operate fundamental governmental services and payless days for policemen, firemen, school teachers and other public employees!

Excessive cost of government means high taxes, delinquency in payment of taxes, borrowing for current expenditures, which in turn means that huge sums of interest are added to the cost of government.

Delinquent taxes mean lack of operating funds, and financial crises in city finance resulting in curtailment of needed and fundamental functions!

The net result is:

Woeful demoralization of public services, lack of confidence in our public officials, and a serious threat to democratic governmental processes.

You, Mr. Citizen, pay for misgovernment in higher taxes and inefficient and inadequate government services which are your due!

WE CHALLENGE YOU: WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

Read this booklet and follow through with the

CHICAGO CITY MANAGER COMMITTEE

(c) Why Misgovernment is the Rule

Spoils politics is the cause of misgovernment. The political parties in Chicago, to achieve and maintain power, find it necessary to procure "workers" who will canvass precincts, watch polls, count votes, and otherwise "obtain" votes, where necessary, in order to perpetuate themselves in office. The political organizations must then "deliver" by "taking care" of workers and contributors. This means the padding of payrolls with political workers, without regard to the need for such employees, and the granting of lucrative government contracts at excessive and unconscionable terms.

Political parties organized on this basis cannot serve the public according to the needs of the public interest. The party workers loyal to party organization cannot, without committing political suicide, perform their public duties with full regard to the needs and demands of the public.

Bearing in mind that ninety per cent of municipal governmental functions are administrative, rather than policy-determining, we

then have a political rather than a business administration of municipal business.

Spoils administration means misgovernment.

WHY ALL OUR EXCESS BAGGAGE?

Reproduced with permission of the Chicago Daily News

2. THE SOLUTION

(a) What is the City Manager Plan

The City Manager Plan is the most modern form of local government developed after a century of local misgovernment; to over eight million Americans who are living in city manager cities, it is a guarantee of maximum public service at the lowest tax cost; to Chicagoans, it is the "way out" of our perpetual political muddle.

The theory underlying the success of the City Manager Plan (technically known as the Council-Manager Plan) is simple. All the law making power is concentrated in a small council of about 9 members, elected either by the city at large or by districts, thus making a more compact and responsible unit than a city council of 50 aldermen elected by wards; all the responsibility for law administration is concentrated in a single trained executive, the city manager.

The councilmen determine all matters of policy and are responsible solely to the people, by whom they are elected; the city manager translates the policies into action and is responsible solely to the councilmen, by whom he is employed. He has no legislative power, and the council relies wholly upon the city manager to maintain the many municipal services in orderly, economical operation.

The reputation of the corporate device for efficiency is known the world-over. Its plan of organization is reproduced in the City Manager Plan of local government. Just as the shareholders of a large business elect a board of directors which employs a general manager, so the voters of city manager cities elect a council which employs a city manager selected from among men trained in the field of city government.

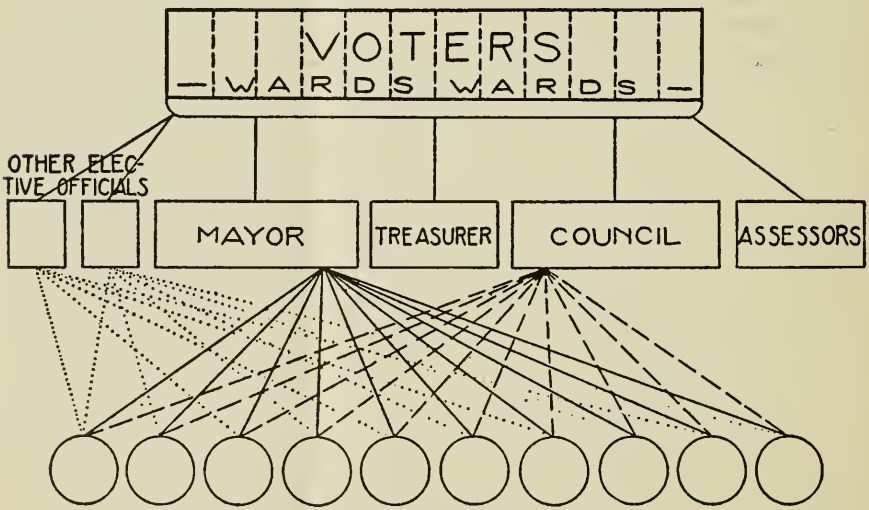
Under the City Manager Plan, the voters have the determining voice in city affairs. By the method of voting known as "Proportional Representation," minority groups are given a fair representation in the council, and the election results are more in accordance with the preferences of the voters than is possible by other methods of voting. Periodical reports of city conditions and the clear placement of responsibility caused by the separation of the legislative and administrative functions under the city manager system make

an understanding of city affairs and an appraisal of city officials more simple for the voters. It thus becomes possible to organize disinterested citizens into a body strong enough to elect good councilmen, as proved in almost all city manager cities.

The city manager, as chief administrator, devotes all his time and effort to the highly technical work of supervising the many public services of a modern city. The council chooses a councilman as mayor to preside at its meetings and to act as the ceremonial head of the city. Department heads, who are required to have executive ability as well as specialized training, are appointed by the city manager, but practically all other employees are under a strict civil service system.

The administrative design of the City Manager Plan produces a clear placing of official responsibilities and prevents the "buck passing" made possible by divisions of responsibility existing in our mayor council system; a graphic comparison of lines of responsibility under the two systems appears helpful:

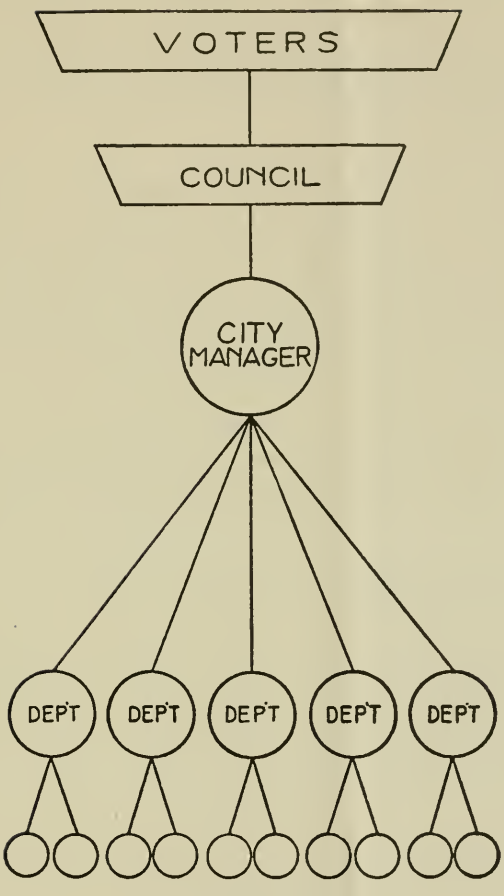
MAYOR-COUNCIL SYSTEM



OLD MAYOR-COUNCIL FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Under this plan, appointments made by the mayor must be confirmed by the council. There are usually a number of separate elective officers, and boards, with varying degrees of administrative authority, that serve further to complicate matters. If things go wrong under this plan, whom can the voter hold responsible?

CITY MANAGER SYSTEM



THE CITY MANAGER PLAN

Note the simplicity of this form of government, and how responsibility is centralized so the voters can exercise control.

The City Manager Plan is an American contribution to the science of local government. It is a recognition of the truth that the form of municipal government, as well as the men in it, is important in securing good government. On the other hand, experience shows that the City Manager Plan attracts and assures a better calibre of personnel than that obtaining under any other form of municipal gov-

ernment. The city manager himself has made city managership a profession, and his first concern has been the choice of well trained assistants while maintaining a personnel of trained and capable employees under civil service requirements. Although it is no magical cure-all, the City Manager Plan is the closest approach yet reached in political science.

(b) The City Manager Plan in Practice

For more than a quarter of a century, the City Manager Plan has proved to be a practical system of municipal administration, and there are now 463 cities and counties using it. It has stood the test of the depression years in proving its merits, as we shall see by examining the record of typical manager cities during this period.

In Winnetka, Illinois, while other Cook County localities were closing schools and cutting employees' salaries, all services were being maintained. This village operated on a cash basis and loaned $100,000 from the reserve fund of its municipally owned and operated utility to other taxing bodies, and it was able to reduce municipal expenditures 22% from 1929 to 1934.

Auburn, Maine, in 1931, suffered the loss of a large textile plant and of two shoe factories. In 1932, a $500,000 payroll loss was caused by strikes in the shoe factories, and the catastrophic fires of 1933 destroyed one-tenth of its total property values and rendered one-ninth of its population homeless. Even so, and in spite of a decreased assessed valuation of $2,000,000 from 1929 to 1932 in taxable property, the tax rate remained at $26 per thousand of assessed valuation; at the end of 1934, the city indebtedness was decreased by $31,000, although a bonded indebtedness of $187,000 was incurred to replace buildings destroyed by fire.

A sister city, Bangor, Maine, adopted the manager plan in 1932. Uncollectable taxes amounting to $100,000 carried as an asset by the previous administration was written off, and at the end of the year the city showed a surplus of $10,000. The next year it reduced the assessed valuation and tax rate and had a $28,000 surplus. When it was necessary to obtain a temporary loan of $700,000 in 1935, the money was readily secured at less than one-third of 1%, whereas other cities were having difficulty to borrow money at 4.5 to 5%.

Binghamton, New York, an industrial town with a heavy relief load, not only took care of that problem, but reduced the city indebtedness by $483,000 in 1932-1933.

The City Manager Plan was adopted in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1932. In the very first year, this new municipal government showed the first cash balance the city has had since 1915. There was a 15% decrease in revenue and 16% decrease in expense though all important services were maintained. In 1931 to 1934 there was a 5.2 per cent decrease in assessed valuation on real property, 10.6 per cent on total valuation, and the tax rate decreased 10.65 per cent.

Kenosha, Wisconsin, whose relief burden increased from $49,000 in 1929 to $320,000 in 1933, had to finance the increase out of cash because it had no authority to issue bonds for that purpose. To add to the problem, taxes in 1930 to 1933 were delinquent more than 20% and its income tax share fell from $590,000 in 1930 to $62,000 in 1934. Despite all this, the city continued to operate on a cash basis, reduced the net debt $357,000 and has decreased the tax burden every year since 1930.

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is an interesting example in this period of high taxes. It has no general property tax levy at all. All operations are on a strictly cash basis and in 1934-1935 after continual decreases in the tax rate, the city manager announced that the revenue from the water department plus miscellaneous revenues would suffice to run the government. In this period the city increased its park area from 850 to 1,320 acres and the park attendance increased by nearly two million persons.

Dallas, Texas, adopting the plan in 1931, inherited a large overdraft from the preceding administration. However, in the next three years, the overdraft was reduced and refunded in the face of declining income. In the meantime taxes were lowered and a cash surplus indicated every year, totalling $318,183 in 1934. In this period a police radio system was installed, a comprehensive drainage plan put in operation to decrease flood danger, a municipal airport developed so that it ranks among the first six in the United States, and five new health centers established.

Berkeley, California, with the reputation of being one of the best governed cities in the United States, has been a manager city since 1923. Each resident pays more for his electric lighting than he does

for operation of municipal government. Its 18c per capita fire loss in 1934-35 was the lowest in the country. The tax rate was $15.90 per thousand in 1931-32, $13.70 in 1933-34 and in 1934-35, $13.60, with the valuation reduced $11,000,000.

Cincinnati, Ohio, is the largest city having the City Manager Plan in the United States. In 1931-35 it reduced the gross bonded debt more than ten million dollars. It borrowed no money, issued no deficiency bonds, and ended each year with a big cash balance. All current bills were paid, and it never missed a payroll. The tax rate for 1935 which includes the city, county and school was reduced $4.58 per thousand from the previous year, making it $16.86, which is lower than that of any city of its size. The rate for the city alone was but $8.15 per thousand. Its tax collections were better during the depression than during good times.

In this period numerous services were added. An advanced police school was established, a police radio system added, a crime detection laboratory created, a new and modern system of collecting and disposing of garbage was installed, a central inspection bureau and central purchasing department set up, and the number of playgrounds and community centers more than doubled.

With approximately 20 per cent of the cities of America over 10,000 population, already operating under the plan, the City Manager Plan is far from being merely an experiment. Four out of every five cities writing new charters are adopting this efficient system of municipal administration. In 1933, 1934 and 1935, 28 cities adopted it, among which are Hackensack, New Jersey; Schenectady, New York; Toledo, Ohio; Saginaw, Michigan; Trenton, New Jersey; and Wheeling, West Virginia.

Thus in city after city good management under a city manager writes a story of successful municipal administration. The City Manager Plan has stood a thorough test when the going was the hardest, and the established records of its success are proof of its merit.

(c) What the City Manager Plan Can Do for Chicago

The most significant benefit to Chicago by adoption of the City Manager Plan will be a decided saving in the cost of city government. It is difficult to make a fair estimate of the amount that will

be saved, but John T. Flynn's report on the experience of Cincinnati suggests the extent to which certain costs will be decreased:

> "In the 'good old days' the boys spent $67,817 a mile for sewers. The city manager did the same job for $47,476. Under the glorious era of 'party responsibility,' oiling streets cost $5.75 for a 50-foot lot, while under the city manager the cost was, for the first year, 97 cents and after that nothing to the property owners. Simple facts like this could be multiplied until they would fill pages."

It is needless to say that the government of Chicago would be simplified and bettered by consolidations of overlapping bureaus, taxing agencies and boards, by centralization of fiscal activities and purchasing bodies, by unified systems of accounting and by uniform methods of administration.

The personnel of all city agencies would be under Civil Service regulations, stringently enforced, and the best business methods of developing responsibility and providing for promotion would be adopted.

A new citizens' organization will dominate the city elections and will have defeated the old machines by having the City Manager Plan adopted. Since no jobs will be available for a successful party boss because of enforced Civil Service rules, the Spoils System will no longer exist in theory; however, the spoilsmen will not yield easily and will attempt to pervert or abolish a city government based on the merit principle. As a result, this new organization of citizens must maintain an active and continuous watch to preserve the fruits of its victory. As demonstrated by the success of the Charter Party in Cincinnati, this can be done; when clear reports of a city manager government are published, voters and taxpayers realize that their continued interest is worth while and they are eager to support a citizens' party bent on safeguarding that government maintained for their benefit.

Since the unit cost of city services will have been greatly reduced, there will be no delay in paying city employees, and no impairment in school facilities or in police, fire and health protection. It will be possible through economies effected by the city manager to provide other needed services and to adequately meet the problem of relief, among others.

City government was never meant to be the plaything of spoilsmen; it logically should be a simple means of obtaining efficiently

rendered public services the voters want. This is what the City Manager Plan has been in 437 American cities. It will prove to be the same for Chicago.

3. YOUR DUTY

(a) The Chicago City Manager Committee — Its Program

The determination of a small group of Chicagoans to do something about this talk of a City Manager Plan for Chicago led to the organization of the present Chicago City Manager Committee. To officers and active members of many representative business, professional, social and civic agencies went invitations to sit together on an Advisory Board to direct an active campaign to educate Chicagoans on the advantages and possibilities of this form of government for Chicago.

These men expected a long and arduous campaign and foresaw the need for a coordinating body for all local organization activity on the City Manager Plan. Moreover, since the City Manager Plan was functioning best in those cities where citizens had continued their active interest after installing city manager charters, the Chicago City Manager Committee was set up as a permanent citizen organization through which Chicagoans could work to obtain and maintain better city government.

Because Illinois, at the present time, does not have any statute under which Chicago or any other Illinois city having a population of over 5,000 can adopt the City Manager Plan, the first step is to secure the passage of enabling legislation at Springfield which will allow any Illinois city to adopt the plan. As soon as the necessary legislation is passed, the second step is a local campaign to secure a favorable vote by Chicagoans on the proposition, "Should We Adopt the City Manager Plan?" After the adoption of the plan, it is essential, as has been demonstrated by the experience of other cities, for citizens to organize to provide constant support for the plan. It is the purpose and ambition of the Chicago City Manager Committee to serve as the permanent agency for effective expression of this citizen interest.

Now and continuously there is urgent need for education of citizens on the City Manager Plan and instruction on the part they

must play to insure the maximum benefit from the plan. These are the jobs which must be done. The Committee welcomes suggestions and invites your participation personally and through your organizations in this important project.

(b) The Chicago City Manager Committee — How It Operates

The general program and fundamental policies of the Chicago City Manager Committee are determined by the Advisory Board, made up of representative members of civic agencies interested in better local government. The Advisory Board elects an Executive Committee to carry out the program and policies.

Educating the voters to the need for a City Manager Plan and enlisting support to obtain it is the primary task of the committee. Its supporters are classified under a Men's Division and a Women's Division, each group being assigned the functions for which it is best suited. Membership in either division is obtained by signing a pledge card binding the signer to vote for installation of the plan when the issue is placed on the ballot; the signer is invited to indicate on the card the kind of additional support he or she wishes to give the committee.

A Speakers' Bureau gives training and speaking engagements to members of the Men's and Women's Divisions; many organizations are addressed concerning the plan by speakers from the Bureau and are invited to endorse the program of the committee by resolution as a body and to support it as individuals by signing pledge cards. A combined phonograph and slide-showing machine the "Visomatic Machine," is sometimes employed by the speakers in order to give an audience an authoritative introduction to the theory and history of the city manager movement. Fifteen minute speeches are given weekly on Station WAAF, the time of broadcast now being 6:15 P. M. on Tuesday evenings.

A publicity bureau works to publicize the objects and activities of the committee, and a research bureau undertakes to supply basic information as it is needed in the work of the committee. The committee has sponsored "Town Hall Meetings" in order to interest and inform citizens about city affairs, with emphasis being given to

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THE CHICAGO CITY MANAGER COMMITTEE

343 SOUTH DEARBORN STREET CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Every voter in Chicago AND THE CHICAGO AREA is invited to join in this citizen's campaign to regenerate Chicago politically, financially, civically, spiritually.

Membership in the Chicago City Manager Committee costs only what each voter can give. The Committee is supported entirely by voluntary contributions. Support may be at the polls alone, active participation in the campaign, or these coupled with a contribution of $1, $2, $5, $10, $100, or $1,000. Each kind of support is needed and welcome.

I BELIEVE in the principles of the CITY MANAGER PLAN OF MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION, and I desire to participate in the movement to adopt this system of government for Chicago as a member of the Chicago City Manager Committee.

I pledge my support to the City Manager Plan for Chicago at the polls when the question is on the ballot, and will endeavor to aid the movement otherwise as checked below:

☐ I will distribute literature on the subject to friends and try to secure their memberships.

☐ I will assist in organizing my ward and precinct groups.

☐ I will endeavor to serve on committees if called upon.

☐ I am pleased to contribute $..... towards the support of this citizen movement.

Do you come under the Men's or Women's division?

.....

Sign: .....

Official acknowledgment will be sent from headquarters.

(OVER)

MEMBERSHIP RECORD

Please fill in and mail this card to the Chicago City Manager Committee, 343 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Name:.....

Home address:.....

Your business or occupation?.....

Are you a member of clubs or societies which might be interested in having a speaker address it on the City Manager Plan for Chicago?.....

If so, please give the name of the organization and the name and address of the president:

.....

.....

.....

Proposed by:.....